

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

**1. (Currently Amended)** An over-coating agent for forming fine patterns which is applied to cover a substrate having photoresist patterns thereon and allowed to shrink under heat so that the spacing between adjacent photoresist patterns is lessened, with the applied film of the over-coating agent being removed substantially completely to form fine patterns, ~~further characterized by said agent~~ containing a copolymer or a mixture of polyvinyl alcohol with a water-soluble polymer ~~other than polyvinyl alcohol~~ which is at least one member of the group consisting of alkylene glycolic polymers, cellulosic derivatives, vinyl polymers and acrylic polymers.

**2. (Canceled)**

**3. (Canceled)**

**4. (Original)** The over-coating agent for forming fine patterns according to claim 1, wherein polyvinyl alcohol is copolymerized or mixed in an amount of 0.1-5 times by weight as much as the water-soluble polymer other than polyvinyl alcohol.

**5. (Original)** The over-coating agent for forming fine patterns according to claim 1, which is an aqueous solution having a concentration of 3-50 mass%.

**6. (Withdrawn)** A method of forming fine patterns comprising the steps of covering a substrate having thereon photoresist patterns with the over-coating agent for forming fine patterns of claim 1, then applying heat treatment to shrink the applied over-coating agent under the action of heat so that the spacing between adjacent photoresist patterns is lessened, and subsequently removing the applied film of the over-coating agent substantially completely.

7. **(Withdrawn)** The method of forming fine patterns according to claim 6, wherein the heat treatment is performed by heating the substrate at a temperature that does not cause thermal fluidizing of the photoresist patterns on the substrate.